

# Letter from the Director

April 2015

Dear Colleagues,

In addition to updating you on our annual Advisory Board meeting you will also find information regarding some new and innovative areas of our work in this month's letter. I encourage you to contact me if you have any questions or comments regarding our Center work.

**Annual Advisory Board Meeting was held in Chicago:** I was delighted to meet with the BSCP Center Advisory Board recently, in Chicago. Key discussion points included how the BSCP Center can best assist SEAs in building their capacity; what SEA staff we should engage with; how do we assist SEAs with high leadership turnover, and how the Center can help SEAs advance productivity when experiencing resource limitations. We found the meeting to be invaluable, and I am grateful to the Advisory Board for taking time to engage with us in this energizing discussion.

Phyllis Hudecki, BSCP Advisory Board member chaired the meeting and commented *“The BSCP Center is ideally positioned to provide much needed technical assistance to state education agencies. SEAs juggle multiple roles including leadership, compliance with state and federal laws, and implementation of new reforms. These varied tasks, while all are important, compete for time, personnel, and other resources. The BSCP is providing customized assistance to help SEAs balance their priorities and improve the functions of the organization as they move toward the SEA of the Future”*.



**Advisory Board attendees: from left to right, Sam Redding, Beth Howard-Brown, Phyllis Hudecki, Laura Anderson, Ryan Wise, Dean Nafziger**

**The SEA of the Future (Volume 4) on Rural Education will be available this spring:** I am pleased to announce the anticipated spring release of the fourth volume of *The SEA of the Future* that explores several different aspects about how SEAs can support rural districts and schools. In this volume, Dr. Paul Hill (founder of CRPE) makes the case for why SEAs should focus on rural education and cites unique challenges rural districts and schools face. Dr. Marguerite Roza (Director of the Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University) considers the productivity of rural districts and challenges the conventional wisdom that rural districts are burdened by high costs and weak student outcomes. Tessie Rose Bailey (Assistant Professor at Montana State University at Billings) and Rebecca Zumeta (Senior Researcher at the American Institute for Research)

consider how SEAs can support rural districts and schools in providing services to populations who require specialized services and programs. Finally, the volume also reports on findings from a consensus panel discussion with leading experts on how technology can benefit rural schools and districts. Please let me know your reactions to this set of essays.

**CCSSO and Edunomics Launch a Productivity Community of Practice:** In my December letter I asked you to undertake a specific resolution—to create conditions to improve the productivity of your system. The goal should be not to simply create efficiencies, but rather to make strategic changes to maximize student outcomes with the funding SEAs have at hand. Through our partnership with Edunomics Lab and with CCSSO, we will convene and support the work of a group of state leaders in an effort to help them frame the SEA’s role in guiding productivity. SEA leaders may opt in to this community of practice, and through their participation will develop a state-specific strategy with smart levers to increase productivity. This community of practice will allow SEA leaders to share learnings, progress, and challenges with those from other states while supported by resources and analyses provided by Edunomics Lab. The chief state school officer and designated team members are invited to participate in this community of practice in May. If your SEA is interested in joining this community please email Laura Anderson [lma86@georgetown.edu](mailto:lma86@georgetown.edu) for additional details and to be included in the May convening.

**Upcoming Event:** July 1 and 2—*Using Strategic Communication to Engage Stakeholders* in Denver, CO

I hope that this letter provides you with a useful glance at our work for this month. I appreciate the continued positive communication and comments you provide us each month. Thanks.

Sincerely,



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### **Building State Capacity and Productivity Center**

The Building State Capacity and Productivity Center (BSCP Center) focuses work on helping state education agencies (SEAs) throughout the country, as they adapt to constrained fiscal resources and increased demands for greater productivity. As State Departments of Education are facing a daunting challenge of improving student performance with diminishing financial resources, the BSCP Center provides technical assistance to SEAs that builds their capacity to support local educational agencies (LEAs or districts) and schools, and to the other 21 regional comprehensive centers and national content centers that serve them, by providing high quality information, tools, and implementation support. The partners in the BSCP Center are Edvance Research, Inc., the Academic Development Institute, and the Edunomics Lab (Georgetown University).

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